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UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

A.L.A. Committee
Binding for Libraries



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

LIBRARY HANDBOOK No. 5

BINDING FOR LIBRARIES

**SUGGESTIONS PREPARED BY THE
A.L.A. COMMITTEE ON BOOKBINDING**

Second Edition Revised

LIBRARY

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**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES**

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BINDING FOR LIBRARIES

In preparing this pamphlet it has not been thought necessary to describe processes of binding nor to include many other items of information which might be interesting, but which are not vital points in the serviceability of rebound books. Such information will be found in several texts on bookbinding, and can always be obtained by writing directly to the A.L.A. Committee on Bookbinding.¹

In using these specifications librarians should take note that they are suggestions only and not hard and fast rules to be followed slavishly at all times. It may well be that other methods now in use are giving as good results. When such is the case no change should be made, due care being taken to ascertain that results from other methods are all that they ought to be. It is claimed for these specifications, however, that if they are followed conscientiously by good binders they will produce books which will give the service required in public library work. They may be used by any binder with only such modifications as local conditions make necessary.

GENERAL STATEMENT

The cheapness of binding is not determined by the initial cost per volume, but by the amount of wear the binding will undergo. A book that costs 30 cents to rebind and circulates 30 times before being discarded costs one cent for each time it goes out of the library. A book that costs 45 cents to rebind and circulates 100 times before being discarded costs less than one-half cent for each time it circulates.

¹The committee at present (1915) consists of: A. L. Bailey, chairman, Institute Free Library, Wilmington, Delaware; Gertrude Stiles, Cleveland Public Library; and J. L. Wheeler, Youngstown (Ohio) Public Library.

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The binding (or rebinding) of a book includes three factors: (1) workmanship, (2) materials used, and (3) methods employed. In the following specifications it will be assumed that all workmanship is first class, being performed by those skilled in the craft of bookbinding. Where cloth is specified it is expected that preference will be given to the buckram made in accordance with the specifications of the United States Bureau of Standards.¹ Where leathers are mentioned it is expected that preference will be given to those sold under the manufacturer's stamp and guaranty of "acid-free."² American cowhide, which is not at present obtainable "acid-free," is specified for certain classes of books expected to have hard service for a limited number of years only.

In the matter of methods employed, the sewing, back-lining, guarding of end papers and sections, and attachment of covers are most important.

SEWING

In library binding all sewing is done by hand and is readily separable into two classes: (1) that performed through the folds of groups of folded leaves, generally known as "bench sewing," and (2) that performed by overcasting groups of leaves from which the folds have previously been trimmed off. This is known as "library sewing," "overcasting," and sometimes as "whipstitching."

"Bench sewing" for library purposes is done sometimes on cords and sometimes on tapes, and is spoken of as sewed "all along," or "one sheet on," meaning that the thread is carried throughout every section from end to end; or, as sewed "two

¹ These cloths are furnished by the Holliston Mills of Norwood, Massachusetts, under the name "Library Buckram"; by the Interlaken Mills of New York under the name "Art Buckram"; and by the Joseph Bancroft Sons Company of Wilmington, Delaware, under the name "Legal Buckram."

² By this is meant leather tanned and dyed in accordance with specifications formulated by the Society of Arts (London), and approved by the United States Bureau of Standards. These specifications will be found in "Report of the Committee on Leather for Bookbinding, Society of Arts. 1905. Bell."

on," meaning that two sections are sewed with the thread of one. Sewing "two on" is an insecure method for library binding, and its use can be justified only when a book has so large a number of thin sections that if sewed "all along" the thread would unduly swell the back.

Cords or tapes serve the double purpose of binding the successive sections together and of offering a means of attachment between the book and the cover. If the book is to be laced into covers cords must be used; if split boards are to be used the book will be stronger when sewed on tapes. The present tendency, however, of most library binders is not to depend on the cords or tapes for strength of attachment to the cover, but upon the proper guarding of end papers, and of first and last sections, and upon strong back-lining properly applied. Three cords, or narrow tapes, may be used on an ordinary eight-inch book; larger and heavier books need an increased number proportionate to their size. As between cords or tapes the choice is in favor of tapes provided ordinary methods of back-lining are used. If, however, the method of back-lining which is described hereafter in the paragraph on that subject is used, it makes little difference whether cords or tapes be used. Theoretically tapes are stronger, actually cords will serve just as well. If cords are used care must be taken to see that saw-cuts are neither too wide nor too deep.

"Library sewing" is a term now commonly applied to that type of improved overcasting done through machine-made holes in the binding edge of the sections of the book. There are several varieties of library sewing on which patents have been issued and there are several others not covered by patents. Library sewing, when well performed, is free from some of the faults of old-fashioned whipstitching. It furnishes the most satisfactory means of resewing fiction and juvenile books, and as these books form by far the larger part of binding in public libraries it necessarily assumes a

place of great importance. It can be produced at about the same cost as bench sewing.

As compared with bench sewing, library sewing has two faults: (1) it encroaches on the inner margin of the book a distance of from one-eighth to one-fourth of an inch, and (2) it is much less flexible in opening. On the other hand, library sewing distributes the thread strain more evenly on each leaf and is, therefore, more durable for books printed on poor paper, and these are, for the most part, sufficiently flexible for all practical purposes.

Papers weak of fiber, yet stiff and brittle, will not hold together if sewed in the regular way and are too stiff to open well if merely given library sewing. A variation that increases somewhat their ability to withstand hard usage is to prepare in the regular way for library sewing, then crease or score each section near the line of perforations before sewing.

In a general way, it may be said that bench sewing is to be preferred (1) where the form of the book, or a flat opening, is of first importance, (2) where the fiber of the paper is strong, and (3) where, though the paper is not particularly strong, hard usage is not expected. Library sewing is to be preferred (1) where the folds of the back of the book are considerably worn, (2) where the paper is very weak of fiber, and (3) where, even though the paper is of average strength, specially hard service is expected.

GUARDING

All books for library use should have the end papers guarded with a thin, tough cloth, and all those which are sewed through folds (bench sewing) and which are to receive hard usage must have the first and last sections guarded. In guarding, the cloth is pasted and folded around the outside of the fold extending one-fourth of an inch on each side. No guarding of first and last sections is necessary on overcast books.

BACK-LINING

Methods and materials of back-lining are exceedingly important in library binding. Formerly it was the custom to paste, or glue, a coarsely woven cloth called "super," or even paper, on the back of the book. Super is the material universally used on all publishers' bindings and its uselessness as a back-lining material was demonstrated long ago. At the present time the best library binders are using strong muslin, canton flannel, thin canvas, or strips of leather for this purpose. A large number of them are using canton flannel and experience has proved that for the great majority of books it has no superior as a back-lining material. It should be cut large enough to cover the back from head to tail and to extend over on each side $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches. In applying, the back of the book should be glued and the canton flannel pasted. Both glue and paste are necessary.

ATTACHMENT OF COVER

There are two distinct methods of attaching books to the cover: (1) "cased-in" books in which cover and book are made separately and then glued together, and (2) books in which there is effected a mechanical attachment between book and boards, followed by the putting on of the covering material. Such a book may have its boards "laced on" by means of cords or tapes, or else split boards may be used and the tapes and back-lining will be glued therein. The split board method is necessary only for very heavy books which are to receive hard usage. The lacing-in of boards prevents the extending of a strong back-lining over onto the boards; hence the cords bear the largest part of the strain at the joint. This method is little used in good library binderies.

Although casing-in is the method used on all publishers' bindings, the weakness of these books is not due to casing-in as a method, but to the machine sewing, the way in which it is

carried out, and to the poor back-lining. In good library binding, library sewing, the guarding of end papers, and the use of canton flannel on the back will make most books strong enough to outwear the paper. No properly bound book will part from its cover, even after hard service. Librarians should hold that if a book does so it is defectively bound and insist that the binder should repair the same without further charge.

If either casing-in or split board method is used, the book should have a French joint. In a regular joint used in conjunction with lacing-in the board lies up close to the projection formed in backing the book. When the book is opened, the creasing of the leather is concentrated on one line. In a French joint the board is set about one-eighth of an inch off from the back of the book and the leather or cloth is pressed down into the depression so formed. When the book is opened the creasing is distributed over a much larger surface. This permits also the use of thicker leather.

PERIODICALS

The number of periodicals that a small library should bind depends entirely on the use that is made of them. In some libraries they are not much used and only such sets as are absolutely necessary in reference work should be bound. Other small libraries make a large use of periodicals in reference work instead of buying expensive reference books. Such libraries will necessarily bind as many periodicals as possible. All periodicals should be carefully arranged at the library and title-pages and indexes put in place before being sent to the bindery. The binder is responsible for collation of main paging. Advertising pages should usually be removed, but the covers of each number may be retained if desired. Purely local periodicals and reports from local societies, municipal boards, etc., should be bound, advertising pages, covers, and all.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR PERIODICALS MUCH USED

These specifications will be found useful only in large libraries and some small college and reference libraries. Most medium-sized and small libraries should use "Specifications for periodicals not much used."

1. Volumes should be carefully taken apart.
2. All torn leaves to be mended with tough paper; plates to be hinged with strong paper.
3. Make fly leaves and end papers of 28×42—100-lb. book paper, guarding each with muslin or jaconet.
4. Guard first and last sections of the book with muslin or jaconet. (This need not be done if the book is to be overcast.)
5. Guard illustrations with thin, tough paper, and, if possible, fold the guard around the adjoining section.
6. Sew "all along" on strong, unbleached tapes not over three-eighths of an inch wide, or on cords, using four tapes or cords for books 10 to 12 inches in height; five or more for larger books. Use a good strong linen thread suited in size to the weight of the book.

If the paper is weak of fiber so that it will easily give way in the folds, sew with some one of the approved methods of overcasting. If overcasting is used, the sections into which the book is divided before sewing must be thin enough to produce flexible opening in the finished book.

7. When cutting off tapes or cords leave about an inch projecting on each side.
8. Trim as little as possible, first pasting adjoining pages of fly-leaves and end papers together.
9. All books must be well rounded and backed and have French joints.
10. After the book is rounded and backed, line the back with a strip of canton flannel which extends on each side a little beyond the tapes or cords. In applying, glue the back of the book and paste the fuzzy side of the canton flannel.

11. Use a good millboard as heavy as the weight of the book will allow.

12. Bind in one-half morocco ("acid-free") with sides of cloth made according to the Specifications of the Bureau of Standards. Never use Persian morocco, buffing, cowhide, or roan. Some moroccos, not "acid-free," will give satisfactory service, but the "acid-free" leathers are preferable.

13. Paste down end papers. These carry with them (1) canton flannel which comes next the board; (2) the tapes or cords; and (3) the guard of the end paper. If the work is properly done, no fear need be entertained that the book will come out of the cover.

Where the volume is very heavy and likely to receive hard usage, it may be advisable to glue the canton flannel with the tapes or cords into split boards.

14. Press thoroughly. It is recommended that binders be urged to arrange their work so that the gluing operations of forwarding and the putting into press may all be accomplished in one day before the glue is thoroughly set.

15. Lettering to be done in gold leaf according to the style agreed upon. Binders should preserve "rub." The essential items are title, months (if other than the calendar year), year, volume number, and name of library. These should be clear, plain type with figures in Arabic. Two forms are suggested:

Forum	Forum
38	July 1906
July-June	June 1907
1906-7	38
Name of Library	Name of Library

SPECIFICATIONS FOR PERIODICALS NOT MUCH USED

This heading will include by far the larger number of bound periodicals.

1-5. Same as preceding.

6. Sew "all along" on strong, unbleached tapes not over three-eighths of an inch wide, or on cords, using four tapes or cords for books 10 to 12 inches in height; five or more for larger books.

7-11. Same as preceding.

12. Bind in full buckram made according to the Specifications of the Bureau of Standards. Use a color dark enough to show lettering in gold.

13-15. Same as preceding.

FICTION AND JUVENILE

In communities where there is comparatively little manufacturing, or where very little soft coal is used, the leaves of books will stay clean much longer than in those places where the opposite conditions prevail. It is advisable, therefore, in such cities and towns to bind fiction and juvenile books in one-half cowhide. In those places where there is much smoke and dirt in the air, books frequently have to be discarded long before the binding is worn out, and it is best to use full cloth which conforms to the Specifications of the Bureau of Standards. Several large libraries, after careful experiments, have decided to use cloth exclusively for fiction and juvenile books. It is evident, therefore, that great care must be taken in deciding this point. Cowhide, undoubtedly, makes a stronger and more attractive-looking book and most public libraries should use it. Cloth is subject to the following objections:

a) If a color light enough to take lettering in ink is used, it quickly becomes dirty and the lettering on the back becomes obliterated.

b) If a color dark enough to take gold lettering is used, still it will not hold the lettering nearly so long as leather.

c) Cloth softens up around the back as leather never does.

d) Cloth-bound books invariably become worn at the hinges, joints are weakened, and they look bad before they

are actually worn out. On the other hand, leather binding always looks well on the shelves no matter what the condition of the book may be inside. Most binders will bind fiction and juvenile in one-half cowhide almost as cheaply as in the better grades of cloth.

Mend fiction and juvenile books as little as possible before rebinding. Never use paste or glue for mending the back of the book. Do not resew and put back in publisher's covers. Do not wait till the book falls apart before sending to the bindery, but send it as soon as it becomes a trifle shaky in the covers. Of course, if the book is not to be rebound, it can be mended as much as seems desirable. Many illustrations may be discarded as worthless before a book goes to the binder.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR FICTION AND JUVENILE

1. Bind only perfect books (some may be rebound if one leaf only is missing).
2. Clean old glue off backs carefully before hammering.
3. Mend all torn leaves with thin, tough paper.
4. Make fly-leaves and end papers of 80-lb. book paper with cloth joints to be sewed as separate sections.
5. Sew with some one of the approved methods of over-casting. In the case of stiff paper, score each section along the line of perforations before sewing.
6. Trim as little as possible, first pasting adjoining pages of fly-leaves and end papers together.
7. All books to be well rounded and backed and to have French joints.
8. After the book is rounded and backed line the back with a strip of canton flannel which extends on each side a little beyond the tapes or cords. In applying, glue the back of the book and paste the fuzzy side of the canton flannel.
9. Use a good quality of millboard.

10. Bind in one-half cowhide (or full buckram) with buckram, or waterproof cloth, sides; corners to be turned in without cutting away material. Never use buffing. Roan may be used if the librarian is convinced that it is of good quality. Good roan, however, is very hard to obtain.

11. Paste down end papers. These carry with them (1) canton flannel which comes next the board; (2) the tapes or cords, and (3) the guard of the end paper. If the work is properly done, no fear need be entertained that the book will come out of the cover.

12. Put in press over night.

13. Letter in gold. The necessary items are author, short title, call number if desired, and name of library. Use a clear, open type and Arabic figures.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Reference books may be bound the same as periodicals. Those much used should be bound in half morocco or half pigskin ("acid-free"); others in full cloth, meeting the Specifications of the Bureau of Standards. Heavy books, such as dictionaries which are constantly handled, should be sewed on an extra number of tapes, and the tapes and back-lining carried into split boards. If the book is to be bound in full cloth, choose a dark color and letter in gold.

CLASS BOOKS

All class books, except those which will receive hard usage, should be rebound in full buckram, or imperial morocco cloth, using a dark cloth and lettering in gold. The end papers should be guarded, but it will not be necessary to guard first and last sections. Books should be cased-in, using canton flannel on the back in the same way as described under specifications for periodicals.

NEWSPAPERS

Ordinarily it will not be necessary to bind newspapers in the smaller libraries. They can be tied up in packages laid flat between pasteboards, wrapped to exclude dust and light, and filed chronologically in a cool, dry place. If put into book form, they should be bound in the best quality of duck with cloth sides. Some form of overcasting will be necessary and the bands and back-lining should be placed in split boards. Boards should be of double thickness and should have vellum corners. Libraries that can afford it should use some fiber-filling preservative on the edges of the leaves.

GENERAL REMARKS

If desired, head bands may be used to give a finish to the book. They add nothing to serviceability.

Leather should be used only on books that are to be constantly handled.

Only good glue should be used and binders should be cautioned against using too much. All superfluous glue should be removed in the process of forwarding. Many binders have been very successful in using flexible glue.

Books should be trimmed as little as possible.

Lettering on the back should consist of author, short title, and call number. Binders should give a price per volume which will include all lettering.

Some binders advocate machine stitching the first and last signatures instead of guarding. This should *never* be done, since it throws an extra strain on the leaves of these sections and weakens rather than strengthens them.

Cheap materials should not be used.

All torn leaves should be carefully mended. Always use paste, never glue or mucilage, for this work.

Processes should not be hurried. When the book is bound it should be placed in the press and not removed until thoroughly dry.

It is to be regretted that few binders willingly follow the specifications of librarians. Those outlined above, however, should always be insisted upon, unless it is *certain* that other specifications will give equally good results. The first requisite for good binding is to have a capable binder, but, if possible, find one who will accept suggestions kindly. The best specifications possible will not succeed unless the binder can adopt them intelligently. If a binder cannot produce satisfactory results according to specifications, change the binder. Few librarians know enough about the processes of binding to attempt to teach a binder, but they should know enough to be able to detect poor work, or to appreciate good work. There are enough first-class library binderies in operation to make it no longer necessary for libraries to tolerate poor work or the ordinary commercial methods of binding. They can demand work which fills the requirements here set forth. That the binding is being done in the home town is no good reason for accepting work that is in any way unsatisfactory.

Care should be taken not to rebind ephemeral books for which the demand has practically ceased, nor to rebind books which can be replaced in the attractive publisher's bindings for less than the cost of binding.

Two or three binders buy standard fiction and juvenile books in sheets from the publishers and bind them so strongly that they never need to be rebound. The initial cost of such books is greater than the ordinary publisher's binding, but the prolonged life of the book much more than compensates for the extra cost. When possible all worn-out fiction and juveniles should be replaced with such books.

A number of libraries are reinforcing much of their fiction and juveniles (and even non-fiction) before placing it in

circulation. This is often done by taking the book out of its case and gluing a strip of lining cloth over the back of the pages and onto the cover. In some binderies a structural as well as a glued attachment is made by taking a few stitches through the lining and the first few signatures. Reinforced books are good for 50 to 100 issues in the original attractive cover. The success depends both on the quality of the paper and on the reinforcing. New fiction can often be carried through the period of heavy demand and then discarded without rebinding. If the book-dealer, binder, and library are in two or three separated towns, the time element should be studied, so that there will not be too much delay in getting the new books into circulation.

Some library binders take new books from the covers, resew with an overcast stitch, and put back in the same covers. Such books have all the advantages of the reinforcing just described, and in addition, since they never need to be resewed, can be rebound much easier if rebinding becomes necessary.

HOW TO TELL A WELL-BOUND BOOK

1. Leaves will stay practically flat wherever the book is opened. This is true, however, only of books printed on good paper. Many books printed on poor paper which must be overcast when rebound will not meet this requirement of a well-bound book. They may, nevertheless, be well bound for library use.

2. When a book is lying closed the top cover remains flat. When it is standing on end, signatures do not separate slightly at the back.

3. Feels firm and compact to the hand.

4. Will open easily without making the crackling noise which comes from too much glue (or hard glue instead of flexible) on the back.

5. Will be trimmed so that margins will not be askew.

6. Saw cuts will not be deep.

7. Book must have French joints.

8. Paper will not be crushed in backing.
9. Book will not easily separate from the back when pressure is applied. (See Dana, *Bookbinding for Libraries*, p. 37.)
10. Lettering on the back will be legible and put on straight.
11. The real test is the number of times (not the length of time) the book circulates. With the exception of books printed on heavily loaded papers, a rebound book should circulate 100 times as a minimum. Many will circulate over 150 times.

READING LIST ON BINDING

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A translation of a German work.
- Bailey, A. L. Bookbinding. 1911. A. L. A. Publishing Board. 10 cents.
Preprint of Manual of library economy, chapter 26.
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A periodical published by W. E. Reavis, Los Angeles, California, covering various phases of library binding.
- Bliss, H. E. Better bookbinding for libraries. *Library Journal*, 1905, 30:849-57.
Brief article on methods and materials.
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- Brown, M. W. Mending and repair of books. A. L. A. Publishing Board. 15 cents. (Library handbook No. 6.)
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Also published separately by Mr. Chivers. A record of experiments and tests of modern book papers.
- . Relative value of leathers and other binding materials. 1911. Published by the author.
A record of tests of leathers. Practically the same article will be found in the *Bulletin of the American Library Association* for 1911, p. 164.

- Cockerell, Douglas. Bookbinding and the care of books. 1902. Appleton. \$1.25.
Best general book on binding processes, but does not cover all library requirements.
- Coutts, H. T., and Stephen, G. A. Manual of library bookbinding. 1911. Libraco Limited. 7s. 6d. net.
A valuable book for all libraries. Gives the English point of view.
- Crane, W. J. E. Bookbinding for amateurs. 1903. Scribner. 65 cents.
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The best single book for the librarian.
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A good article on mending.
- Society of Arts. Report of the Committee on leathers for bookbinding. 1905. Bell. 10s. 6d.
- Swezey, A. D. Binding records. Public Libraries, 1909, 14:5-7.
- Worcester (Mass.) County law library. Leather preservation. 1911.
- Zaehnsdorf, Joseph. Bookbinding. Macmillan. \$1.50.

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